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An
Essay
on
Pneumonia Vera.
by
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of
South Carolina.

Passed March 8th. 1823

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Pneumonia Vera.

Under this title is comprehended Pleurisy or an inflammation of the pleura or lining membrane of the thorax; and Peripneumonia, or an inflammation of the parenchyma or substance of the lungs.

I am led to treat of these two forms of disease under this title, for two reasons. The first is, that the Professor of the practical chair in his lectures, includes both under this head: and the second is, that the causes and symptoms, are so nearly allied to each other, that it is almost impossible to draw a correct diagnosis between them. In addition to which the treatment of both is precisely the same.

Whether a person be attacked with pleurisy or peripneumonia, the following symp=

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-toms will designate the diseases. Viz. pyrexia, difficult respiration, cough, pain in the breast or one of the sides or back. In some cases, there is an expectoration of mucus, or mucus streaked with blood; in others, there is no expectoration, except a little phlegm. But these symptoms are variously modefied in different cases.

The disease sometimes commences with a cold stage, succeeded by the other symp-toms of fever. At other times, the pyrexia is from the commencement, attended by its other symptoms; and very frequently, the pain is felt first, but is not very se-vere, until the pyrexia occurs.

The pulse is, always, at the commencement frequent, full, strong, hard and quick. In the advanced stage the pulse is some times weak, soft and irregular. The tongue is covered with a white fur, and the

urine is high coloured.

A difficult respiration is always an attendant symptom. Inspiration is performed with much more difficulty, than expiration. Different attitudes of the body, also have an effect upon respiration. The patient generally breathes with more difficulty when lying on the affected side; but sometimes the reverse occurs. In most cases, respiration is easier when the patients head and shoulders are somewhat elevated. The pain attendant on the disease is various, both as regards its violence and seat. Sometimes it is very acute and pungent, at others it is dull and obtuse, bearing more a resemblance to the sense of pressure, than of pain. It is seated sometimes in the right side, but as often in the left. Sometimes it is felt in the sternum, and at others in the back.

The cough is not uniformly the same in all patients. It is sometimes dry in the commencement, but oftener it is moist, and the matter expectorated, differs in colour and consistence in different cases.

Causes. The causes of this disease, are cold applied to the body, particularly when heated, thereby obstructing perspiration, and determining the circulation to the lungs. Sudden changes of the weather are very apt to produce this disease; and hence it prevails most commonly during the winter and spring. But it is not confined wholly to these seasons, for it may occur at any time, when there are sudden vicissitudes of weather from heat to cold. It is said to affect, oftener those of strong and vigorous constitutions, and persons somewhat advanced in life. It cannot be said

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however to be confined to any particular age or constitution.

Among other causes of pneumonia may be enumerated, violent exercise in speaking and singing, blowing on wind instruments, or any violent exertions of the lungs, external injuries from blows or falls, an intemperate use of spirituous liquors, and breathing air adulterated with deleterious vapours.

Prognosis. The unfavourable symptoms of this disease, are great difficulty of respiration; no expectoration; a high degree of fever, attended with delirium and acute pain; great prostration of strength; livedness of the lips and countenance; dropping of the under lip, and sinking and irregular pulse.

The favourable symptoms, are an abatement of the febrile symptoms; a decrease

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of the difficult respiration and diminution of pain. A free expectoration of mucus or mucus streaked with blood taking place, and the urine depositing a copious sediment, are also indications of favourable augury.

Dissections. Dissections of those who have died of this disease exhibit the pleura and lungs in a state of inflammation, accompanied mostly with an extravasation of blood or coagulable lymph into the cellular substance of the lungs. The surface of the pleura and lungs is found covered with a great number of small red vessels, and often times overspread with a layer of coagulable lymph. Besides these appearances, abcesses, tubercles and adhesions of the lungs are frequently to be met with. A quantity of purulent matter

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is sometimes to be met with in the bronchia.

Treatment. From the frequent occurrence of this disease, it is rendered comparatively one of easy cure: and is better understood than most of the diseases of the class to which it belongs. The symptoms attending it, plainly show it to be a high degree of inflammation of the lungs or their lining membrane the pleura. Drawing our plan of treatment from this view of the disease, we cannot hesitate or be at a loss as to the appropriate remedy to be employed in the commencement of this affection.

Ever since the time of Sydenham, practitioners have universally agreed, that the primary indication is the reduction of inflammation.

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plishing this end, is by copious and repeated venesection. Nor is this opinion wholly confined to the faculty, for, even the vulgar and illiterate, are so strongly impressed with the absolute necessity of bloodletting in this disease, that using the language of an eloquent lecturer, "Should we meet with any opposition to the use of the lancet, we have only to proclaim to the patient, it is pleurisy, and in an instant all objections vanish."

Commencing our treatment, therefore, with venesection, we must open a vein in the arm, and let the blood flow copiously from a large orifice, until the pain and difficult respiration, are greatly relieved, or as long as the pulse and strength of the patient, will allow or the symptoms require.

By this prompt measure, we will in a great many cases, convert an active and violent inflammation of the pneumonic organs; into a mild and simple catarrh.

But should this not be the desirable result; and the pain and dyspnoea return, we must again and again repeat the bleeding, until fully satisfied that the inflammatory diathesis is completely removed, or so far weakened as can with propriety be done by general venesection.

It not unfrequently happens, that after we have carried general bloodletting as far as we deem consistent with the strength of our patient, that the pain still exists, owing to the action in the capillary vessels not being reduced.

Here we must recur to local detraction

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of blood by means of cups, or by leeches, applied to the sides, breast or back.
The next proper step to be pursued, is the application of a large blister over the whole of the painful part. and this may be kept open or fresh ones applied until the pain and inflammation is wholly removed.
The patients bowels should be kept in a soluble state by the neutral salts or by laxative injections. Active purging will be found injurious in this disease.
To promote expectoration, and at the sametime to produce a gentle diaphoresis, are our next objects. These indications are best accomplished by small and repeated nauseating doses of Tartris Antimonii and Nitras Potassae. The sixth of a grain of the former, combined with twelve grains of the latter,

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administered every hour or oftener, will be found to answer this purpose exceedingly well. At the sametime, promoting the effects, by small and repeated draughts of some mild and diluent beverage; as lemonade, toast water, apple water, &c. These drinks should always be moderately warm, but never cold.

In producing the same effects, a decoction of the Serpentaria Virginianna, will be found highly usefull. As also will a decoction of the Polygala Senega; after the removeal of the inflammatory diathesis.

During the whole course of the complaint, the patients strength is to be supported with a light nutrient diet, such as arrowroot jelly, sago, panada, tapioca, rice and such like articles. All of which may be rendered agreeable to the patient,

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by adding a little lime or lemon juice, and a little white sugar.
The only drinks should be such as are thin, mild and diluting as simple water, toast and water, lemonade, barley water, apple water, linseed tea, a solution of gum arabic in water &c.
All heating and stimulating drinks are strictly to be prohibited.
The room should be kept at a moderate temperature, neither too hot nor too cold.
Exposure to cold should be carefully avoided, and all other causes that might produce a relapse. For this is very apt to occur upon the least exposure or irregularity, and is always more obstinate and dangerous, than the primary attack.
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a relapse, or to prevent the disease from terminating in consumption or hydrothorax, and entierly eradicating the complaint, is to touch the mouth gently with mercury. This may be effected by a combination of Calomel Ipecacuanha and opium as in the following formula, ℞. Calomel one grain. Ipecac half a grain and Opium a fourth of a grain which may be given at short intervals. Or a gentle ptyalism may be produced by adding one grain of Calomel to each of the antimonial powders: Should this prove purgative, a few drops of laudnum may be given.

There is another form of this affection which differs from the preceding, both in its symptoms and treatment. Being a complication of Pleurisy and Bilious

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fever, it has received the title of Bilious Pleurisy.

Bilious Pleurisy generally commences with the symptoms of pneumonia, to which are added, the violent headache, the red and suffused countenance, the gastric uneasiness, the bilious retching and vomiting and the dark furred tongue of bilious fever.

Bilious Pleurisy may be distinguished from the preceding forms of pneumonia; by the pulse not being so strong, full or hard; the pain rarely being increased by breathing or coughing; and the decubitus being easy on either side. This disease most commonly prevails in the low marshy districts of the southern States; and is mostly met with during the winter. It generally attacks persons of weak and delicate

constitutions. and especially those who have had an attack of intermittent or remittent fever, the preceding fall.

Treatment. When called to a patient labouring under this affection, the primary indication, which is suggested by the dark furred tongue, the bitter taste, the bilious eructations, and the gastric distress, is to cleanse the primae viae of their offending matter. For the accomplishment of this end, nothing will be found so useful as emetics. In the commencement of all bilious affections they stand preeminent. After having properly discharged the stomach of its contents, the bowels should be unloaded by a mercurial purge, which may be followed by a dose of sulphate of magnesia or sulphate of soda. The primae viae being properly

cleansed, our next object is to relieve the pain and cough. This is best effected by applying a large epispastic over the whole of the breast. At the same time administering freely a decoction of Senega or Serpentaria, and small nauseating doses of emetic tartar or ipicac. Should the patient begin to sink under the disease, and the oppression still continue, with a diminution of expectoration, in addition to those on the thorax, blisters must be applied to the wrists and ancles, and his strength supported by stimulant medicines given internally. The carbonate of ammonia is highly recommended for this purpose. It should be given in small and frequent doses, so as to keep up a constant and equal excitement. It may be given either in boluses or in julep,

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but the latter mode is preferable. The julep is made as follows. ℞ Carb: Ammon. ʒj. Pulv. Gum. Arab. ʒij. Sacch. alb. ʒij. Aq. Font. ℥vj. M. A table spoonfull may be given every hour or oftener; and at the same time wine whey may be drank "ad libitum. The camphorated julep will also be found very useful in this stage of the disease. It is made thus. ℞. Camphor: ʒj. Pulv. G. Myrh: XXX gr. Sacch. alb: ʒij. Aq. Font. ℥vj. To be taken in the same way as the Vol. julep.

The patients diet during the disease should be light and nourishing. and as soon as the fever and inflammatory symptoms have been reduced, tonics will be advisable. The best of these is a decoction of bark and Serpentaria with wine.

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Pneumonic Inflammation

1823

L. Smith